2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

remainder of the time surveying the culture on the islands of Fulanga, Ongea, Mothe, Namuka, and Wangava in order to check and gain prospective on the detailed picture and to secure a larger choice of informants. Altogether I studied 11 villages with a total population of over 1,500 natives.

The greatest difficulties in the work were encountered in attempting to recover the old religion after almost a century of mission influence and to analyze the intricacies of the social system after sixty years of British rule. Most of the old religion has been lost. The fragmentary account here presented (pp. 105-119) has been recorded as it was obtained from aged informants, especially Moto and Tchosaia of Kambara, Kalo of Fulanga, and Mosesi of Namuka. Much of it has been taken from the notes of Bernhard Tueting. It may be colored by the teachings of the missionaries.

Changes due to interisland warfare, to Tongan contacts, and to European influence have obscured or changed important aspects of the social organization, especially the phratry division, the local unity of clans, the ranks and functions of clan titles, and native social values in general. To gain a picture of the system as a whole it was necessary to make a detailed analysis of the social organization of the 11 villages studied. The analysis as here presented (pp. 31-103) is based on the genealogies of 37 clans recorded in the field, sketch maps of each village, property rights, clan gods and their incarnations, legends, ceremonies and the statements of reliable native informants. The data have been checked by an examination of archaeological sites such as hamlets, fortresses, and sacred places (pp. 216-223).

As will be seen in the following pages, a knowledge of the Lauan social system, based as it is on the native concept of mana expressed in social prestige, is vital to an understanding of the culture as a whole. Moreover, the evidence from which the system has been reconstructed is rapidly disappearing. Hence time was devoted to its study at the expense of the study of other phases of life—such as technology, social ceremonial, and games—which it is hoped may still be studied in the future. In such studies of material culture as were recorded an attempt was made to emphasize functional rather than technological aspects. The development of the individual, social sanctions and law, native medicine and changes due to the introduction of western civilization have been described in a special study of culture change and colonial administration in Lau (23)[1] and hence have not been included in this monograph.

This study is an attempt to record the most important aspects of the native culture of Lau as a whole before they disappear. It is necessarily incomplete. The aim has been to describe the culture of southern Lau as revealed by field research on the six islands visited in its geographic setting and, as far

[1] Numbers in parentheses refer to Literature Cited, p. 224.

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SOUTH SEA MAGIC.

We were running along the coast in smooth water beneath the high cliffs of Vanua Balavu, the northernmost island of the Lau Group—a group whose scattered islets dot the sun-kissed Pacific over a stretch of two hundred miles between the colony of Fiji and the island kingdom of Tonga. It was a sunny afternoon, and, reclining on a long chair on the deck of the little government yacht that carries the District Commissioner about on his multifarious duties, I was drowsily listening to the throbbing of the engines when I noticed one of the crew, a fuzzy-headed convict, gazing intently at a little bay between the cliffs. (The crew of the government yacht are always made up from the gaol, and this plan works excellently, as the Lauans are born sailors, and under the firm discipline of an experienced captain, and with a warder always on board with them, there is never any trouble to be feared. Indeed, most of them are gaol-birds of but mild hue, with wings temporarily clipped for comparatively trifling offences, petty larceny

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being one of the most common, as the Polynesian Lauan—true to type—is by nature more light-fingered than his semi-Papuan brother of Fiji.

I asked the man what he saw; and, seating himself cross-legged in the attitude of respect, he politely answered, "It is nothing, sir, I was but thinking of Filipi, a man formerly of my town."

"And what about Filipi? What did he do?" I inquired.

"He is dead," he answered, looking down at the deck.

Knowing from the man's attitude that there was something behind all this I asked him freely to tell me all. No one enjoys "spinning a yarn" more than a South Sea islander when he really gets started, and many interesting old legends, and, incidentally, helpful facts in my work, have I picked up in this way on some of my lengthy sea-journeys about the group.

"It was this way, sir," he began. "It was said that *dua na vakadraudrau ca* (some evil magic) was performed at that place there," pointing with his chin—the same gesture his Malayan ancestors had used thousands of years before—at the little bay we were passing. "I know nothing of it myself," he hastily added. "It is only what I have heard, and it happened years ago, just before you, sir, first came to Lau. Now, Filipi and a man of Nayau Island were doing

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a very wet and disconsolate castaway that eventually stepped on the sandy beach of Doi, and turning round sat down to gaze at the ship and meditate on the prospects of getting home again. Here was I, on a tiny islet, inhabited by a handful of natives, at the extreme south of the Fiji group —so far south, indeed, as to be well on the way towards New Zealand, and not on the Fiji chart at all—and if the ship were disabled or unable to be floated off again I might be settled here for a month before a relief ship could reach me. There is, of course, no "wireless" on such remote islands as this, and the Ono Islands are seldom touched at beyond my own annual visit of inspection.

We eventually floated the vessel off, after a trying time of several days on the reef; and what with that and a severe gale that subsequently arose I was detained at Ono for some eleven days, during which I spoke no English, and found for literature only a copy of the *Auckland Weekly News*, just fifteen months old, to amuse myself with. It was during that time, when we sat out in the warm, moonlit nights, watching the distant reef, and wondering always whether *that* night's tide would be sufficient to float her free, that I heard some of the old-time tales of the ancient gods of Lau.

There is a fair-sized village at Doi, and, luckily, the Chief of the Island was a most intelligent

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man, though of a somewhat dreamy nature, and although he pretended to laugh at these tales of olden days, I could see that he more than half believed them. But being intelligent he was, at all events, able to tell a connected story, and also help me elicit one from others; and some of the tales I heard then I now set down.

"Did you hear that, sir?" he said, suddenly, one night as we were seated on the beach with some of the local islanders round a little wood fire, kept up more for the sake of re-lighting the oft-renewed *sulukas*, or native cheroots, than for actual warmth.

"That" was the distant beating of a *lali*, the big wooden drum found in all Lauan villages. The air was still, yet the sound was but faint that came to us from over the great lagoon that stretches between Doi and Ono Islands. I had several times heard the Ono *lali* before; and on calm days such as this it had seemed quite close, and certainly different from this faint sound, which now had ceased altogether. Some of the men looked at each other.

"Perhaps it is *Sagasagawalé*, for I know of no meeting to be summoned at Ono to-night, and why else should the drum be sounded?" said one of them, a little awkwardly.

"Don't be a fool," said the Chief, with a curt laugh. "These are enlightened times, and

[text continues on p. 70]

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Sagasagawalé is not rung now," and he stooped to throw another stick on the fire.

But as he sat up again he turned to me, and said a little doubtfully, "It was the Ono *lali*, sir, was it not?"

"How should I know?" I answered, somewhat amused. "I am a stranger here; you people must know your own *lalis* better than I do. But who or what is *Sagasagawalé* anyhow? But, first of all," I added, "tell some one to go and get some *Yaqona* with this shilling from the store of Joni, and a bowl shall be prepared out here." For I knew that if there was any tale to be told the South Sea kava would bring it to the surface.

THE RAPE OF "SAGASAGAWALÉ."

Soon was started the rhythmical pounding of the *Yaqona* stone, crushing the dried root between it and the large flat slab below. And then Wiliami, the Chief of Doi, turned to me and said:

"In the old days, in the times of our forefathers, there was war in the land, and on this island and on Great Ono there was much fighting, and all lived in forts on the hill-tops, nor was there ever any rest for us. But there came a day when Matokano town, across the lagoon there, became the strongest, and its chief, Tui Matokano, ruled the land. Then there was peace, but all looked

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demons when one hears it. And the people at Matokano named their drum *Sagasagawalé*, which means 'All our work for nothing.' *Sagasagawalé* was still standing at Matokano town when my father was a young man, for he saw it, though it had then nearly rotted away."

The *Yaqona* was now prepared, and a young man brought me the first cup, holding it up with both hands; and all called out "*Maca*" when I had drunk; for even in the most informal gatherings the people never omit the due ceremonies connected with *Yaqona* drinking.

THE GHOSTLY HEAD OF ULUPOKA.

Then when the others had each had their drink I asked if the gods always flew, or how did they get from place to place? I heard one man, the island constable, who owned the appropriate name of "Jonetani Gucake" (Jonathan the Zealous), whisper something about "Ulupoka."

"Well, Jonetani, and what about Ulupoka?" I asked.

Then Jonetani settled himself comfortably on his crossed legs, tailor fashion, and said:

"In the old times we of Ono had a god (and I have heard that he was also a god of Lakeba) called 'Ulupoka.' But he was *dua na ka rerevaka dina* (a fearsome thing of awe), and was

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when he is about. You know the light *kato* (palm-leaf baskets) that are often thrown away empty about the town. 'Ulupoka' delights to climb into these, and sometimes when there is not a breath of wind one may see a basket suddenly go rolling along across the grass. Then we know that 'Ulupoka' has got into it."

The others all nodded their heads in acquiescence, and murmured "*Sa dina*" ('tis true).

THE FISHING OF THE SACRED "YAWA."

On another night we were speaking of fishing, and of the best-flavoured fish; for when one gets down to the primitive life one's thoughts turn naturally to food, and I was no exception, for there was not much else to talk about.

"The *saqa* is good, and the *kanacé* is good, but the *nuqa* is sweetest of all," said the native magistrate, a noted fisherman, who was sitting next to me.

"True are your words, sir," said a Doi man, sitting opposite; "but I think you cannot have tasted the *yawa*, the great fresh-water fish of Vanua Balavu."

"No. What is that, Rusiate?" replied the native magistrate.

"It is the sweetest fish in all the world, sir," replied Rusiate; "but it is sacred to the people of

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115 Mavana, and 'tis only fished about once in three
226 years."

[778] "Tell me all about it," I said, scenting a good tale.

Then Rusiate turned to me and began.

"My mother is of Mavana town, so that I count with Vanua Balavu, and, indeed, have only lately come back here to live at Doi, my father's land. And I am of the *mataqali* (tribe)
226 that catch the sacred fish. And the catching
796 of it is thus. When it appears to the priest (that is, of course, to the descendant of the old priests, for there are no heathen priests to-day," he added, hastily) "that the time has arrived for the fishing, he goes to inform Tui Mavana, who is the great chief of all the northern half of Vanua Balavu, the long island. And Tui Mavana gathers together his people, and they take their canoes and work round the coast till they arrive at the deep bay of Masomo. There they disembark, and climb up the sloping hill-side, through the woods, till they come to the marsh of the *yawa*.
[349] Then a *buré bolabola* (rough arbour or shelter) is put up at the edge of the swamp and the priest
[793] retires inside it. The priest to-day is Juta, the son of Eroni." (I was quietly amused at this naïve
[276] confession.) "Then *Yaqona* is made, with much ancient ceremony; and after that a *lovo* (oven of heated stones) of food is prepared, and a

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opening until at last the strand gave way with a snap, and all the lot of them fell through. But the goddess happened to be passing over Masomo just then, and not over the sea, so that the fish fell on the grass and lay there gasping.

"The goddess flew on, not knowing what had happened; but when she arrived at Laucala great was her dismay on turning out her basket to find nothing but some bits of mud and leaves and a few fish-scales. And the god at Laucala thought she had been making a fool of him, and was angry and would have nothing to do with her.

"So she flew sadly back to Tonga, weeping bitterly as she went. And most of her tears fell into the sea; but as she passed Masomo, some of them fell there, where the fish lay. And they were not enough to form a pool of water, but just enough to make the ground marshy, and that is why the fishing place is a swamp to-day. And the fish-scales may still be seen at Laucala, looking like dusty glass."[1]

THE GOD WHO STOLE THE WATER FROM MOALA ISLAND.

"There was another carrying of goods between Tonga and the Lau Islands," said a man who had not yet spoken; "but that was no accident, but a thing of purpose."

[1] Probably mica.

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"What was that, Jale?" said the Doi chief, taking a fire-brand to light his *suluka*.

"I don't know the tale very well," replied Jale; "for it was told me by my mother, and she only heard it from *her* mother, who was a woman of Moala Island. But I think it ran as follows:

"Long before the *Gauna Vakatoga* (the time of the Tongan occupation) there were occasional visitors from Tonga in canoes that were blown out of their course. And sometimes these people were killed, and sometimes—if there were many armed men in the canoe—they were met in a friendly spirit and entertained till they could return to their own land. And thus a Tongan canoe once came to Moala Island.

"And when they were about to return, the Chief of Moala gave to the Chief of the Tongans his daughter, Roko-vaka-ola, to wife. And Roko-vaka-ola was very beautiful, and had found favour in the eyes of Kubu-ni-vanua, the great god of Moala. And she wept and entreated her father that she might not be sent to Tonga; but her father was secretly afraid of the Tongan chief, and she had to go. And so she was taken to live at Tungua Island, where her Tongan husband gave her a fine house and all that she could desire.

"But still she was not happy, and wept often

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THE DUEL 'TWEEN GOD AND GHOST.

I WAS riding along the white beaches of Cicia Island with my native magistrate, after a very trying day in the provincial courts, deciding such trifling points (though important to the natives) as alleged thefts of copra, petty assaults —with scores of contrary witnesses on each side— or cases of conjugal infidelity, and was already feeling refreshed and invigorated by a swift canter against the evening breeze. Reining up as we came to a patch of sea-worn pebbles and stones, with here and there a knob of filagree branching coral over which our horses stepped gingerly, my friend Wiliami turned to me and said:

"Just there, sir, by the roadside, you may perhaps see among the palm-trees an upright stone. That is the throne of Rata Maibula, the ancient god of Tarakua town, who was worsted in the great duel with the ghost of Ratu Koli."

Scenting a good legend, and knowing Wiliami of old as one who had the judicial mind, and an unbiassed view-point—despite his brown skin—I thought that here was an opportunity to get

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hold of one of the old pieces of native mythology unadorned with the modern interpretations that are so frequently put to them, and events proved that I was not mistaken.

"You must know, sir," he began, "that I am truly a man of Lakeba Island, but my grandmother was of this place, and from her, when a boy, I heard the tale of the god, Ratu Maibula, and the ghost, Ratu Koli. And this is what she told me:

"In the very early days there were two towns up on the hill-crest there, overlooking the sea towards the setting sun, and their names were Na Vuwai and Watika. Always were there great matters of dispute between these towns, till one day the men of Na Vuwai arose, and making their way by stealth among the trees they came upon the people of Watika, and slew them; so that none remained but some few of the Naibili tribe, who chanced to be out fishing on the reefs below. These were saved by a *Latui*,[1] who circled round and round the burning houses, and then swooped down to the men of Naibili, crying out in great grief, and calling their attention to the smoke rising on the hill-top. This, sir, was because the Latui was the Kalou Vu[2] of the Naibili tribe.

"And in the course of time they moved down

[1] Hawk. [2] Ancestral god.

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SOME LEGENDS OF THE EXPLORING ISLES.

I WAS examining a curious stone axe-head in the house of Adi Lotila, a very old widow of chiefly rank, at Loma Loma town, when she looked up at me from the woven grass mats on which she was seated, and said, with that innate courtesy which no amount of "civilization" has yet dispelled from the Lau islanders, "It is yours, sir, if you desire to have so small a thing." Knowing that she would only feel hurt by refusal I accepted the gift—mentally resolving to send her some small present in return; and then sat down to have a chat with her. And so we talked of the days of old—the days when this axe-head had been used by her ancestors, or, perhaps, even her father—for so recent is the Stone Age in this race of cultured people among whom the mere absence of iron did not necessarily denote barbarism.

I asked her if she thought it was a good implement to hew out a canoe with, and she replied, with a smile on her still handsome old face, "No, sir;

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the iron tools that you white chiefs brought to Fiji far surpass our ancient axes in hardness, though that stone you hold is indeed a hard one, almost hard enough to hurt the children of Rasikilau." And then she told me the story of Rasikilau the Mighty, and from that went on to tales of the other gods of the Exploring Isles[1] till the lengthening shadows at the house-door made me realize with a start how long I had spent listening to these legends, told by the lips of the last of the old people who still held personal belief in them.

"In the days before the first foreign ship came to Lau," she began, lighting a *suluka*[2] with a small fire-brand, "there lived on Cikobia Island over yonder a god called Rasikilau, whose movements shook the hills when he walked, and whose head reached the tops of the highest palm-trees. Even now, when the men of Cikobia lie out on the beach on hot nights, they can sometimes feel the earth tremble, and they know that Rasikilau is moving near them.

"Now, Rasikilau mated with a goddess, a princess beautiful to see, who came sailing in a canoe from far away to the north,[3] so far that no man has ever known the name of that land;

[1] Vanua Balavu and a few adjacent islets of northern Lau.
[2] Native cheroot.
[3] Probably part of the legend that the Cikobia of Lau people are *tauvu*, or of common ancestry, with the people of Cikobia i Ra, an island to the north of Fiji.

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in the morning whether, even at this day, the ancient heathen observances of Dakuwaqa,[1] the shark-god, still lingered among the people.

I had noticed one of my policemen among them, and next morning, after a few questions on other matters, I said, "By the way, Apenai, what was that little talk of Dakuwaqa I heard among you men at the wharf last night?" Apenai looked a bit confused, and then replied, "Oh, no, sir; I had nothing to do with that. I had only just arrived when they started to lower the *Yaqona* to Dakuwaqa. They are *lialia*[2] to do such things in these enlightened times. It is true, sir, that this morning it was found that the *Yaqona* had been accepted and taken away; but, perhaps, it was not Dakuwaqa after all. No one believes in Dakuwaqa nowadays." But, for all his protests, I firmly believed that my trusty constable had had more than a passing interest in the little tribute to Dakuwaqa, and I decided to ask Adi Letila to tell me more of this mysterious creature, the shark-god who patrolled these waters and disturbed even the official minds of "the force."

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That afternoon I found the old lady just putting away her stencilling outfit of cut banana leaves and *kosa* dyes; for she had had a busy day, for all her seventy odd years, at designing the brown and black patterns on a huge sheet of

[1] Literally, the hull or back of a ship, implying his enormous size.
[2] Foolish.

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now? The day's work is ended, and if you have anything to say it would be well to say it in the office in the morning."

"'Tis I—Roko Malani," replied the old man, drawing nearer and clasping my outstretched hand, for he was an old friend of many years' standing and a retired head of a district. "True are your words, sir," he added, "as to the ending of the day; but I have been away working in my plantation—for I can yet teach these young men how the dalo should be planted—and it came to my mind that the payment of the Government rents might take place this evening."

"No, no, Roko Malani," I answered with a laugh. "Are not all the papers and the bags of money locked up in the great iron box (the safe) for the night? The order has gone out that in the morning there will be a rent-paying, and I shall then have to hear all the disputes as to the lands."

He laughed; for it is notorious that there are more land disputes at Lakeba Island to the square mile than on any other island in the group.

"Nevertheless, we know that the *matanitu*[1] will give a just decision as to these disputes," said the old man. "But in the time of Ma'afu,[2]

[1] Government.

[2] Ma'afu from Tonga made himself practically King of the Lau Islands, and was recognized as such by the British Government on the cession of the whole Colony of Fiji, and retained as Governor of the group at a large salary.

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So ended the tale of old Roko Malani; and after a little further talk he departed, erect and with firm tread, a splendid instance of the courtly old native of the Lau Islands—a true chief, who could proudly recount the doings of his ancestors directly back for ten generations; and who, even in these modern times, retained the complete respect of his people.

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Printed by Jarrold & Sons, Ltd., Norwich, England.